Churchtown Centennial Celebration

May 30, 1966

MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day

Memorial Day, Memorial Day,
What does it mean to you?
Are you filled with a sense of gratitude
for souls that were stanch and true?

Will you spend the day in rollicking fun
Just fritter the day away.
Does your frivolous soul demand of you
That you spend the day in play.

Oh, pause awhile in a solemn mood
and think of the debt we owe
To those who stood the brunt of war
The anguish, the pain, the woe.

Reverently place where the soldier lies
The flag he helped to save,
And breathe a prayer of gratitude
As you bend over the soldier's grave.

Mr. Robert Simpson

Robert Emmett Simpson

Robert Simpson was born on April 27, 1870, in Churchtown, Pennsylvania, and remained a life-long resident of the village until his death on July 22, 1962.

Mr. Simpson had a deep interest in all community activities and had been one of the most liberal contributors to the advancement of its welfare. The long list of organizations that he was active in attest to this fact: President of the Memorial Society, in which he was active for eighty-five years; Secretary of the town's Electric Light Co.; Secretary and Treasurer of the town's Improvement Society; Secretary of the Caernarvon Fire Co.; Secretary and Treasurer of the township supervisors for twenty-four years; member of the Caernarvon Mutual Benefit Assn.: member of the Caernarvon Protective Assn.; Secretary of the Caernarvon Cemetery Assn.; financial secretary of the P.O.S. of A. for forty years; and a member of the Churchtown Lodge Ancient Order of the Knights of the Mystic Chain.

He taught for forty-four years in the township schools, the last twenty-eight of them at the Beartown School. Mr. Robert Emmett Simpson will long be remembered for his Memorial Day interests and his written contributions, the *Conestoga Rambler* and the *Annals of Conestoga Valley*.

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History of Churchtown Memorial Society

The Churchtown Memorial Society was organized for the purpose of nurturing and promoting patriotism in the community. They met monthly in Rinck's Hall for many years. An entertaining program was held at each meeting consisting of music, debates, etc., somewhat similar to old time Lyceums. One of the most pleasing entertainments given was Mrs. Jarley's wax figures with Mrs. J. C. Petre as conductor.

This Society erected the soldiers' memorial tablet and native stone in the Methodist Church Cemetery in 1919. A new soldiers' memorial tablet was erected and will be dedicated this year (1966), forty-seven years from the old one. The committee in charge was George E. Bewley (President of the Society), Davis Yohn, Barton Hurst, and Robert E. Simpson. A parade was held followed by the rededication of the monument. The speakers were Hon. John A. McSparran of Fulton Township, and Hon. Eugene Hendricks of Reading.

The Society still meets in April and May of each year to prepare for the annual Memorial Day parade.

This parade has become an institution of Churchtown and a homecoming day for former residents. The decoration of soldiers' graves was instituted by Israel Clark and other Civil War veterans soon after the organization of the G. A. R. in 1866.

The children of the community take part carrying flowers and flags today as they have done from the first. The placing of earth's fairest emblems on the graves of the soldiers, to pay a tribute of love and remembrance to the memory of the departed, has grown into almost universal custom. The sight of the Methodist Cemetery at the close of the day is very beautiful. For many years the old town cornet band played free of charge. Later a collection was taken for them. Now with no band in Churchtown, it costs about $150.00 for music.

The greatest event in the history of the Memorial Society was when they held the George Washington Bicentennial celebration on Saturday, July 2, 1932. It was one of Churchtown's gala days with a very large assemblage. The parade with national guards bands, the old Caernarvon Band, antique vehicles, floats, children in colonial dress, old time fire companies, and citizens in dress of by-gone days, will live long in the memory of those attending. At the head of the parade was George Washington on a white charger, personated by Smith M. Shirk. Betsy Ross, Benjamin Franklin, Uncle Sam, and a host of others were represented.

Prof. Frederick Gaige of Millersville delivered the address. The star performance of the program was the children minuet in old time costumes. Robert E. Simpson was Chairman of the committee, assisted by William Weaver, Dr. C. S. Duttenhofer, Sallie Yohn, James Foreman, L. A. Weiler, Miss M. Davis, and Emma Weaver (now Dilworth).

The writer always looks forward to Memorial Day, when we pause in our daily occupations to honor the memory of those who fought that we might enjoy the liberties we cherish today.

What is it that they gave to us and has been nurtured by our people down to this present moment? It is a government where men have the finest opportunity to enjoy the abundant life. The abundant life without God is unthinkable. The rule of God means the rule of love, kindness and justice, which we today found makes men happy. Some force is going to rule and when it is not God, it is greed, or cruelty, or brute strength.

As the shadow of the atrocious events overseas falls menacingly toward America, it is time for us to ponder and think of means to preserve our mode of living.

This was written by Robert E. Simpson about the year 1940.

Good Show,

Memorial Society

We applaud your efforts. Your Memorial Day celebration does double duty as a service project by providing entertainment for the public and funds for a worthwhile community purpose.

Because New Holland is a community-minded company, it appreciates and encourages the participation of its employees in civic activities. Consequently, the company has a special "hats off" to the Caernarvon Memorial Society, an organization that has many New Holland employees on its roll.

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CAERNARVON MEMORIAL MONUMENT

The Caernarvon Memorial Society erected a Soldiers' Memorial Tablet of native stone in the Methodist Cemetery in 1919. This tablet was replaced by a new monument in 1965. The dedication of the new monument will be in May, 1966. It is dedicated to all who have served in the past and will serve their country in the future.

COVERED BRIDGE

This covered bridge located on the old road from Pool Forge to Beartown was built around 1850. It was used for public transportation till 1963 when it was deeded to Wm. W. Wimer III. Now it is a source of picturesque beauty and of historical interest.

CHURCHTOWN METHODIST CHURCH

The present building of the Churchtown Methodist Church was built in 1879. Rev. Edward Devine, pastor at the time, drew up the plans for the church. The stones for the church were quarried on the sandstone ridge on the north side of the valley by the members free of charge. Worship service is conducted every Sunday at 9:30 A.M. with Sunday School at 10:30. Present day pastor is Rev. John S. Hinkel.

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CAERNARVON ACADEMY

The congregation of Caernarvon Presbyterian Church decided in 1853 to erect a building to be used as a classical school under thc direction of the church. The building was leased in 1879 by the Township School Board to be used as a public school. It was so used till 1965 when it was demolished to make way for the new Caernarvon Elementary School.

BANGOR EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Founded in 1722, the church was named for Bangor Cathedral, in North Wales. It is one of the oldest inland Episcopal churches in America.

In Bangor's burial grounds lie soldiers of every war in which this country has been involved: The French and Indian, The Revolution, War of 1812, Mexican War, Civil War, Spanish War and World Wars I and II.

Never since her founding, have the blue doors of Bangor Church been locked by day or night. Visitors are always welcome to the little stone church.

CAERNARVON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Caernarvon Elementary School building was erected in 1965. It replaced the one room schools of the township. Stones for the north wall and the cornerstone were salvaged from the old Caernarvon Academy. It contains 13 classrooms, a library and a large multi-purpose room.

Present principal is Mr. Ronald P. Snyder.

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WINDSOR MANSION

Windsor Mansion is one of the oldest mansions in the township. It is an English type building with a huge fireplace in the center. The windows, dormers, cornices and doorways are adorned with much woodwork. The doors have massive locks.

At one time it was the home of Miss Blanche Nevin, the famous sculptress of the township.

Present owner is Hon. Francis B. Sayre.

CAERNARVON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

This stone structure was completed in 1834. The same pastor that served the Cedar Grove Church served the Caernarvon Presbyterian Church. It was closed for a number of years. For several years after 1939 it was used by the Conestoga Choral Singers. At the present time it is used by an independent church group for worship services every Sunday.

POOL FORGE MANSION

This beautiful mansion is over 200 years old. It contains a wide hall with wide stairs leading to the upper floors. Some of the fireplaces that were in all the rooms have been removed. At one time there were 38 buildings located on the grounds which consisted of over 3200 acres. The main attraction was the iron forges located in the back of the mansion.

The present owners are Mr. and Mrs. William W. Wimer III.

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Robert Springer
Evan Yohn
Haggeman Hoffard
Samuel Jacobs
George M. Spots
George W. Spotts
Harry Zeardt
Harry Frankinfield
Walter Frankinfield
Isaac Hawk
Jacob Hoffman
Adam Yohn
Joseph Gorden
John Patton
John Sheaffer
Joshua Diller
Robert Everhart
G. W. Benner
John Clark
John Dolby
William Kimball
Robert Kimble
Herbert Brunner
Lloyd Yohn
Harold Miller
George Simpson
James Reifsnyder
Israel Clark
Bently Hyman
Andrew Stephenson
Martin Grube
Daniel Grube
James O'Donnel
George Patton
John Thomas
William Hoffman
George Welsh
I. S. Boley
Bently Hoffman
Samuel Patton
Earl Erb
Nevin Hoffard
James Baxter
C. Donald Styer
David Sandoe
William Leeds
Frank Miller

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John Jones
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Eugene R. Gockley
James Witwer
Samuel Edwards
Mrs. Israel Clark
Linda Troop
Ken Clark
Elam Shirk
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The committee wishes to thank all those who have helped make this celebration a success.

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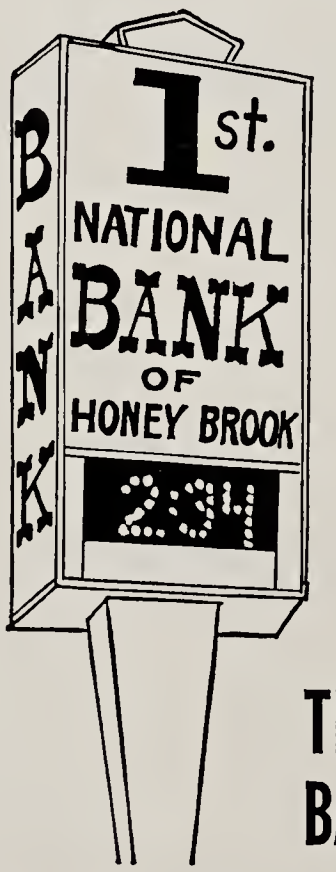

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Birth Place Altoona, Pennsylvania; December 18, 1898.

Family Son of James T. and Kathryn Smith Van Zandt, descendants of pioneer families of Blair County. Married Esther L. Meisenhoelder, 1947. One son, James Edward, II.

Employment Newsboy at 10; apprentice in PRR shops in Altoona and promoted through departmental ranks to District Passenger Agent. Granted leave of absence in 1939 to occupy seat in U. S. Congress.

Public Office He served continuously in Congress from 1939 to 1963 (except for 3½ years of active Naval duty during World War II). In 1960 he was re-elected by the largest majority of his Congressional career.

Congressional Experience He served on numerous special committees and was a Congressional advisor on Atomic Energy at many international conferences. His duties took him behind the Iron Curtain, to both the North and South Poles, and to the majority of other countries throughout the world.

Military Service Active naval duty in World Wars I and II, and the Korean Conflict. Enlisted as Apprentice Seaman in April, 1917, and retired January 1, 1959, as Rear Admiral, USNR.

During World War II, Captain Richard M. Scruggs, USN Commander of Flotilla 7 (LST) commended Commander James E. Van Zandt as follows, "*You have made a record for D-Day participation and troops and cargo carried, that, in my opinion, no other flotilla can equal. You have been bombed, shelled, and torpedoed, but the fires were extinguished, the holes plugged, and NOT A SHIP HAS BEEN LOST.*"

His military decorations include: Legion of Merit, Combat V; Bronze Star Medal, Combat V; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; Korean Campaign Medal; Philippine Liberation Medal; Philippine Government Legion of Honor; Naval Reserve Medal with 4 Stars; Fleet and Transport Clasps; American Defense Medal; United Nations Service Medal; WorldWar I and II Victory Medals with Bronze A.

Veterans' Organizations Three times National Commander (1933-36) and twice Pennsylvania Department Commander (1928-1930) Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U. S. Member of the American Legion, Amvets, World War I Veterans of the United States. He has received numerous awards and citations for extraordinary service from various groups including the Pennsylvania Department of the American Legion. He is also the recipient of the Distinguished Service Medal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.

Fraternal Affiliations He is a member of the Eagles, Elks, Lions, Moose, Masons, Shrine, Royal Order of Jesters, Sons of the American Revolution, and an honorary member of the National Council of Boy Scouts of America.

Program

5:00 P. M.—Parade

6:30 P. M.—Unveiling of Monument - - - - - - - - By the New Holland Legion

7:00 P. M.—Opening Prayer - - - - - - - - - - - - Rev. John Hinkel
Churchtown Methodist Church

Welcome Address - - - - - - - - - - - - Roger C. Lincoln
Lansdowne, Pa.
Instructor of Social Science, Ardmore Junior High School
Former Churchtown Resident

Memorial Day Address - - - - - - - - - - - James E. VanZandt

Impersonations of Lincoln - - - - - - - - - - - Paul E. Uibel
R. D. 1, Stevens, Pa.
Impersonator of Abraham Lincoln

Emcee for the Program - - - - - - - - - - - - B. F. Weaver
Lancaster, Pa.
Lancaster County Commissioner and Former Churchtown Resident

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